

STATEMENT  
OF THE BOARD  
05.05.2013

## Diagnose-Funk rebuts Prof. Lerchl's attempts at defamation

Prof. Dr. Alexander Lerchl, dean for Life Sciences at the Jacobs University Bremen, makes the untenable claim that Diagnose-Funk e.V. would have sent out snooping e-mails. He broadcast as much at workshops, on the Internet, but also in e-mails. Highlight to date: On Sunday, April 14, 2013, the chairpersons of all parties represented at the Council and the Lord Mayor of the City of Herrenberg received an e-mail from Prof. Lerchl in which he tries slandering the chair of the Diagnose-Funk e.V. Board, who is one of the councilors here, by absurdly accusing him of "snooping" and comparing this method to totalitarian dictatorships.

**The allegation:** Diagnose-Funk allegedly tries snooping on recipients of its e-mails. It does so through so-called e-mail tracking where images are embedded that are only downloaded from the server when the recipient opens the e-mail (if image loading is allowed). For practical reasons, this downloading of images from HTML e-mails is common practice among political parties, environmental organizations, industrial and trade companies in their day-to-day business. Lerchl knows this, but he circulates this defamatory statement anyhow.

**The background:** On April 4, 2013, Diagnose-Funk e.V. declined an invitation to a workshop of the Science Forum EMF at Berlin. Diagnose-Funk e.V. writes a letter in which it justifies its decision based on the fact that this workshop is an alibi event of the telco-lobby. The revelations, some of which were new, about the division of labor among the industry, parts of the scientific community, and slander forums on the Internet regarding so-called "risk communication" attracted great interest, even internationally. This letter from Diagnose-Funk e.V. can be downloaded in English and German from the science blog of Darius Leszczynski (Finnish radiation protection agency):

<http://roundtableinitiativeoncellphones.wordpress.com/2013/04/06/balancing-debates-opinions-of-diagnose-funk-and-myself/>

In order to distract from the contents of the letter, in which Lerchl's lobbying endeavors are also addressed, he has chosen to make a personal defamatory statement against its author. He writes as follows:

Dear Lord Mayor,

Jörn Gutbier, vice-chairman of your party (*DF note: "your party" was corrected to "the Green Party" in a follow-up e-mail*), sent an e-mail to me and a large mailing list on April 4, 2013, which I hereby forward to you, including all the attachments.

Aside from the polemic contents of these documents, which I do not intend to say anything about, I find it quite a novelty that an elected representative of a political party, even if in a different capacity, sends out a snooping e-mail with which it is possible to snoop on the recipient in various ways as far as the received and possibly forwarded message is concerned.

What this is all about, you can read here: <http://www.izgmf.de/scripts/forum/index.php?id=53056>

### Diagnose-Funk

Umwelt- und  
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zum Schutz vor  
elektromagnetischer Strahlung e.V.

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### Chairperson

Jörn Gutbier

### Secretary

Uwe Dinger

### Diagnose-Funk

is an international, interdisciplinary and non-partisan environmental and consumer-rights organisation, which fights for the protection from electromagnetic fields and radiation.

It is the aim of Diagnose Funk to inform the public of the harmful effects of electromagnetic fields from its different sources on the health and the environment. In doing so, Diagnose Funk is not in any way dependent on industry or politics. These efforts are to provoke change in behaviour on the part of consumers and politicians, and the push for solutions, involving the use of technologies that are both fit for the future and in harmony with the environment.

I am utterly appalled about this course of events and also shocked. That a democratically elected representative of a political party would use such a tool, which rather reminds me of methods applied by past Great- and East German dictatorships, leaves me for a loss of words.

I would be interested to hear your views on this.

Please do not click on the tracking image or "here" at the bottom of the e-mail. The attached PDF files are safe.

Best regards and many thanks,

Alexander Lerchl

With this e-mail and his feigned outrage, Lerchl completely confirms the arguments put forth by Diagnose-Funk in its cancellation letter to the Science Forum EMF. The method of his choosing is very much a classic smear campaign. The fabricated allegation that Diagnose-Funk would try snooping on recipients in an e-mail relies on an investigation by the IZgMF Forum. Not to leave themselves legally vulnerable when making this allegation of snooping, however, the IZgMF authors, who provided this clue to Lerchl, admit at the very bottom of their discussion the following: *"If Diagnose-Funk actually used the technical possibilities of its own snooping e-mail, I cannot say with certainty."* Lerchl circulates this speculation, which has been admitted as such by the authors themselves as a fact. This is a classic case of defamation. A nonfact is presented as a fact.

**Aberrations:** By assuming that HTML e-mails with downloadable images would constitute a *"novelty,"* he makes a fool of himself. A selection of organizations that use the same technology as Diagnose-Funk follows: Telekom, Amazon, Tchibo, the Umweltinstitut München e.V., CAMPACT, the Greenpeace Magazine, the newsletter of Bündnis90/Die Grünen in Baden-Württemberg, the federal CDU, Foodwatch, and many others. Even the Scientific Institute for Infrastructure and Communication Services GmbH (WIK), which maintains close ties with the industry, sends its newsletter in this way.

With his comparison regarding the Vice-Chairman Jörn Gutbier that this would remind him of *"...methods applied by past Great- and East German dictatorships..."*, he certainly overstepped the mark.

**Embarrassing behavior:** This event is only one in a series of personal defamations with which Prof. Lerchl and the IZgMF forum have tried to ruin the reputation of scientists of important studies such as the authors of the REFLEX study or Prof. Lennart Hardell. Now the dirty IZgMF forum apparently has zeroed in on Diagnose-Funk e.V. with almost daily posts. This forum also seems to become Prof.

Lerchl's main place of publication due to the lack of other recognition. Thus he reveals his own level of intellectual and scientific aspirations.

For a scientific discussion, Dr. H.-P. Neitzke from the renowned ECOLOG-Institut had already in 2011 made an unusual statement regarding Prof. Lerchl:

"As a private person (Prof. Lerchl), he can do whatever he would like to do, but he also holds a public office as a member of the German Commission on Radiological Protection. It should be possible to expect from a member of the German Commission on Radiological Protection that he would take a critical look at scientific studies—provided that this scrutiny is not applied to only those studies that do not fit his own "scientific worldview;" acquire at least the necessary expert knowledge required for a critical review; conduct an objective debate.

Prof. Lerchl does not fulfill these requirements. The polemics and factual shortcomings of his criticism go a long way toward promoting a development in which the already low reputation of the German Commission on Radiological Protection is lowered even further in the public's view and in which a constructive dialog becomes impossible with the not insubstantial part of the population and medical community that critically reviews the risks of electromagnetic radiation exposures, be it high-tension transmission lines, cell or other wireless antenna systems. The form Lerchl has chosen for his crusade is not only objectively and politically unwise, but, according to a scientist who has been involved in the EMF debate for more than 20 years, it is quite simply embarrassing." (EMF – Monitor 4/2011)

**We ask the question:** For how long is this man still to be tolerated by the scientific community as a research project leader, by the Jacobs University Bremen as a tenured professor, and by politicians as an advisor?

The Board

Jörn Gutbier

Peter Hensinger

Jürgen Groschupp

Klaus Böckner